

Gentle Remembrance

Canada · Week of 11 November



For recreation therapists and activity aides in Canadian long-term care and personal care homes. Print what you need. Leave the rest.

Large type. Short steps. Dementia-safe language. Canadian spelling. One click PDF. No login required for this preview.

Pictures for this week

Use these on a screen or print one page for the program table. They are calm on purpose.



A red poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*). Wikimedia Commons, Robert Flogaus-Faust, CC BY 4.0. A flower, not a battlefield.

Gentle Remembrance

A quiet week of peace and thanks. November 11 without loud sounds or war stories.

Staff briefing

Hello friend. Thank you for leading this tender week with care.

Remembrance Day is 11 November. Our tone is calm, respectful, and quiet. We honour service and hope for peace. We do not share battle scenes, sirens, combat stories, or loud videos.

Key rules:

- No war films, no battle books, no siren sounds, no marching loud music.
- Use words like peace, thanks, care, service, remembrance.
- Poppies are welcome. Keep a few spare paper poppies.
- Two minutes of silence is optional. Offer a quiet minute instead if that fits better.

Veterans in our home:

- You do not need to know who served. Never ask residents to disclose service.
- Say this once at group: If you served, thank you. If you wish to share one to one, I am here to listen. No pressure at all.
- Offer optional 1:1 visits for veterans or family of veterans. Keep it private and short.

Grief support:

- Some residents lost partners, parents, or friends. Tears are normal.
- Sit beside them. Say: I am here with you. No need to fix feelings.
- Tell the nurse or social worker if sadness lasts past the group.

Room setup:

- Low lights, soft. Chairs in a small circle.
- Centre table: white cloth, battery candle, small vase, poppy bowl.
- Turn off hallway TV and close doors before you start.
- Have water, tissues, and blankets ready.

Language tip:

- English: Thank you for your service. We remember with peace.
- French: Merci pour votre service. Nous nous souvenons en paix.

Seven-day gentle calendar

All groups 15 to 20 minutes. Quiet voice. No clapping games this week.

Monday: Peace Begins

- Morning circle: Place one poppy in the bowl together. Say one word for peace. Calm. Kind. Home.
- Afternoon: Soft piano or strings. Fold paper poppies at tables.
- Room visits: Offer a paper poppy. Say: This is for remembrance week if you would like one.

Tuesday: Thank You Notes

- Morning: Write or dictate short thank you cards. Prompt: Thank you for keeping us safe.
- Afternoon: Deliver cards within the home to staff or to each other. No mail out needed.

- Evening: Window sit. Watch light change. No programme needed.

Wednesday: Hands of Care

- Morning: Hand massage circle with unscented lotion. One person at a time.
- Afternoon: Sort photos of peaceful scenes. Lakes, gardens, snow. Invite pointing and smiling.
- Room visits: Warm cloth for hands. Sit quietly for five minutes.

Thursday: Stories of Kindness

- Morning group: Share helper stories only. Prompt: Tell me about someone kind who helped you. No war prompts.
- If a veteran shares service memories one to one, listen. Do not probe for combat detail. Thank them.
- Afternoon: Read two short poems about peace. Pause between each.

Friday: Preparing for Quiet

- Morning: Practise our quiet minute. Say: Tomorrow is our quiet day. We will sit softly for one minute. You can close eyes or look at the candle. Both are fine.
- Afternoon: Set remembrance table together. White cloth, candle, poppies.
- Tell families: Service will be brief, quiet, no loud music.

Saturday: Gentle Gathering

- If 11 November falls this week, hold brief observance today or on the 11th. See Group script.
- If 11 November is outside this week, hold a peace circle instead. Same script minus the silence timing.
- Afternoon: Rest. Soft music. No bingo. Keep halls calm.

Sunday: Comfort and Close

- Morning: Pass battery candle. Each person holds it and says: Peace for our home.
- Afternoon: One to one visits. Offer tea and quiet company.
- Evening: Leave poppy bowl in lounge overnight with sign: Thank you.

Note: If 11 November is a weekday, move the Saturday gathering to that date. Keep all other days the same.

Group script

Use for the brief observance. Total 12 to 15 minutes. Speak slowly. Pause often.

You will need: battery candle, poppy bowl, printed short poem, clock or watch.

Welcome, 2 minutes: > Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining our Gentle Remembrance. We are here to say thank you and to wish for peace. You are welcome just as you are. You may listen only. That is plenty.

Lighting, 1 minute: Light the battery candle together.

> I will turn on this candle for peace. It will stay on while we sit together.

Words of thanks, 3 minutes: > We thank those who served our country. We thank families who waited at home. We thank helpers, nurses, and friends who cared for others. We remember with kindness.

Pause.

> If you served, thank you. If you lost someone you loved, we are thinking of you today.

Quiet minute, 2 minutes: > Now we will share a quiet minute together. You can bow your head, close your eyes, or look at the candle. I will tell you when we begin and when we end. There will be no bells or sirens.

Wait five seconds.

> We begin now.

Time 60 seconds of silence. Sit still. Breathe softly.

> Thank you. Our quiet minute is done.

If someone speaks or moves, smile and let it be. No shushing.

Poem, 2 minutes: Read one short verse slowly. Example words you can use:

> For peace in our home, > For friends far and near, > We say thank you today, > And hold you all dear.

Closing, 2 minutes: > Thank you for sitting with us. Take a poppy if you wish. Stay for tea or rest in your chair. We are glad you are here.

Play one soft song if you wish. No anthems with loud brass unless residents request it softly. Keep volume low.

For 1:1 veteran visit, use these lines only: > Thank you for your service. I appreciate you telling me a little. We can stop any time. Would you like quiet company or a short story about home life today?

Three room-bound cards

Large print. Calm colours. No poppy pins with sharp backs for those with hand confusion. Use paper poppies only.

Card 1: Quiet Company Visit > Hello [Name]. I am here for a quiet visit. > Step 1. Sit with me for a bit. > Step 2. Hold this soft poppy if you like. > Step 3. Sip some water together. > Step 4. Look at this lake photo with me. > Thank you for your time. Rest well.

Staff note: Stay 10 minutes. No need to talk the whole time. Presence counts.

Card 2: Thank You Card Making in Bed > Hello [Name]. Let us make a thank you card. > Step 1. Pick red or white paper. > Step 2. I will write your words for you. > Step 3. You can sign or make a mark. > Prompt to say: Would you like to say thanks to a helper, a nurse, or a friend? > We will deliver it for you.

Staff note: Offer stickers, not glue. Keep scissors with staff.

Card 3: Peaceful Minute in Room > Hello [Name]. A calm minute for us. > Step 1. I will turn on this soft light. > Step 2. Hold this warm cloth. > Step 3. We will sit quietly for one minute. > Step 4. I will say thank you for peace when we finish. > You did very well.

Staff note: Skip if resident seems restless. Offer music or window watch instead. Never insist on silence.

Dementia-safe notes

- Keep sensory input low. Soft light. Soft voice. One item at a time.
- Never test memory. Do not ask: Do you remember the war? Do you remember your rank?
Say instead: Thank you for being here.
- Never require disclosure. Service sharing must be fully optional and private.
- Avoid sudden sounds. No bugle recordings, no sirens, no clapping. Warn before moving chairs.
- Watch for distress signs: pacing, covering ears, frowning, leaving. Gently guide to a quiet space. Offer water and blanket. Tell the nurse.
- Keep groups small. Six to eight people is ideal. Two staff if possible.
- Use short sentences. Pause. Repeat kindly if needed.
- Honour all backgrounds. Some residents came from other countries. Focus on peace for all. Say: Peace brings us together.
- End each contact with thanks and orientation: You are at [home name]. It is [day]. Lunch is soon. You are safe.
- After 11 November, remove poppy bowl the next day to signal return to routine.

Print list

Print the week before 11 November.

For lounge:

- [] 30 paper poppies, plus 10 spare, no sharp pins
- [] 1 white tablecloth and 1 battery candle
- [] 8 peaceful photo cards, lake, garden, winter trees, 8 by 10 inch
- [] 2 copies of short peace poem in 20 point print
- [] 1 sign: Gentle Remembrance, Quiet Space, Please Speak Softly

For rooms:

- [] 20 copies each of Room Card 1, 2, 3
- [] 20 blank thank you cards with envelopes
- [] Stickers, large, stars and hearts

For staff:

- [] 4 copies of this briefing
- [] 1 quiet minute timer card for tables
- [] 1 list of residents who prefer 1:1 only, from care team
- [] Family note: Our service is brief and quiet, no loud music, all welcome

After: Store poppies flat in envelope. Shred cards with names unless keepsake requested.
Note attendance and mood for care notes.

How to use this PDF

Print the cover in colour if you can. Print the rest in black and white. Leave room cards at the bedside. You do not need to run every program.